

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRAZZAVILLE 0034

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CF

SUBJECT: NGOUABI ASSASSINATION TRIAL, JANUARY 6-8

1. (BEGIN L.O.U.) SUMMARY: DETAILS REVEALED CONCERNING
ATTACK ON NGOUABI AND APPARENT INACTION ON PART OF HIS INNER
GUARD. END SUMMARY.

2. JANUARY 6: MIZELE CONTINUED TESTIMONY, DESCRIBING
DECEMBER 24, 1976 "MEETING OF RECONCILIATION" BETWEEN MASSAMBA-
DEPAT AND NGOUABI. HE ADDED THAT NGOUABI WAS FURIOUS, IN
VIEW OF HIS EARLIER MEETING, TO HAVE RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT
LETTER FROM MASSAMBA-DEBAT, DEMANDING HIS RESIGNATION. WHY
DIDN'T HE ASK INSTEAD FOR ANOTHER SUCH MEETING NGOUABI
REPORTEDLY COMPLAINED?

3. CHAUFFEUR KONDA NEXT TOOK STAND, DENYING ANY CULPABILITY.

4. DANIEL KANDZA THEN WAS CALLED. HE CLAIMED THAT WHILE
INDEED HE HAD BEEN IN CAR (WITH KIANGUILA, KIKADIDI,
MIENAKOU, AND KOUDISSA-TADET) WHICH CALLED ON NGOUABI
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ON MARCH 18, AT TIME OF ASSASSINATION, HE HIMSELF WAS
MOVING CAR AT TIME OF ACTUAL ATTACK, WHEN KIANGUILA RAN OUT
OF NGOUABI HOME AT ETAT-MAJOR SAYING AN "ERROR" HAD BEEN
COMMITTED. HE THEN DESCRIBED HIS FLIGHT ON FOOT, TO
MIZELE'S HOUSE, WHERE HE AND KIANGUILA WERE GIVEN CLOTHING,
THEN TO HOME OF MASSAMBA-DEBAT, "WHO ASKED ABOUT HEALTH"
OF NGOUABI AND KIKADIDI. ACCORDING TO KANDZA, ONLY KIKADIDI

HAD BEEN ARMED WHEN GROUP ENTERED ETAT-MAJOR. HE ADDED THAT IT NEVER WAS HIS, KANDZA'S, INTENTION TO KILL NGOUABI; RATHER, HE PLANNED TO "CARRY HIM AWAY." KANDZA CLAIMED HE WAS LAST MINUTE ADDITION TO GROUP, AND KNEW NO DETAILS. HE DID ADMIT FIRING A VOLLEY "INTO THE AIR", AS THEY FLED.

4. KINAGUILA RETURNED TO STAND TO DESCRIBE SCUFFLE HE WITNESSED AMONG KOUDISSA-TADET, MIENAKOU, AND NGOUABI OVER "SOMETHING IN TADET'S POCKET", ONCE NGOUABI MET WITH GROUP. KIANGUILA SAID HE, TOO, THEN HAD RUN AWAY: HE SAW NOTHING FURTHER; HE HADN'T USED ARMS AND; DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO KIKADIDI.

5. NEXT DEFENDANT, KOUDISSA-TADET, MEMBER OF SALVATION ARMY, DEDCRIBED "REVELATIONS" WHICH HE HAD HAD, DIRECTING HIM TO "SEE" NGOUABI. PROSECUTOR DESCRIBED KOUDISSA-TADET'S RELIGIOUS MEETINGS AS NOTHING BUT PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONING SESSIONS DIRECTED BY MASSAMBA-DEBAT, TO INFLUENCE OTHERS TO IMPLEMENT HIS OBJECTIVES.

6. JANUARY 7: NIKALA, A WITNESS PREVIOUS DAY, WAS ARRAIGNED. DEFENDANT KANDZA SAID HE WASN'T AT ALL SURPRISED TO FIND ARMS IN CAR DRIVING THEM TO NGOUABI, NOR TO HAVE BEEN ASKED TO CHANGE INTO MILITARY GARB.

7 KIANGUILA RETURNED TO BAR, TO SAY HE HAD BEEN PUT INTO CONFIDENTIAL

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RELIGIOUS TRANCE, WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO GO TO NGOUABI AND DEMAND HIS RESIGNATION. AFTER KIANGUILA WAS GIVEN PERMISSION TO SPEAK IN KIKONGO AND PROCEED BEIEFLY, PRESIDENT OF COURT SAID IT WAS TIRING TO HAVE TO GO THROUGH TRANSLATION, AND ORDERED KIANGUILA TO SPEAK IN FRENCH. PROSECUTION SAID THAT SINCE 85 PERCENT OF CONGOLESE PEOPLE ARE LITERATE, THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE TO SUFFER ACCUSED'S ILLITERACY. IN REPLY TO KIANGUILA'S COMMENT THAT HE HAD BEEN ORDERED BY GOD TO NAB NGOUABI, PROSECUTOR ASKED, "IS GOD NEVER WRONG?" PROSECUTOR THEN MADE KIANGUILA OUT TO BE INTELLIGENT MAN, TRYING TO FOOL COURT INTO BELIEVING HE IS ILLITERATE RELIGIOUS FANATIC.

8. JANUARY 8: COURT MET FOR FIVE HOURS ON SUNDAY. PRESIDENTIAL GUARD OKAMBA TOOK STAND, CLAIMING HE HADN'T RECONGIZED KIKADIDI WHEN HE CAME TO ETAT-MAJOR, HAD BEEN AFRAID TO FIRE ON COMMANDOS SINCE NGOUABI WAS AMONG THEM, THAN NGOUABI HAD ORDERED HIM TO SEEK HELP--NOT TO ASSIST ALONE--ADDING THAT IS WAS HE WHO HAD TAKEN NGOUABI TO HOSPITAL.

9. ANOTHER GUARD, BAZONZA, APPEARED SAYING HE HAD BEEN EXHAUSTED ON DAY OF ATTACK, AND THAT NO ONE HAD ORDERED HIM TO CHALLENGE COMMANDOS' CAR: I ONLY FOLLOW ORDERS.

10. HEAD OF PRESIDENTIAL GUARD, ACCUSED OSCAR EWOLO, SAID HE ORDERED TROOPS, AND IT WASN'T HIS JOB TO COME TO DIRECT AID OF NGOUABI. WHY DIDN'T HE ORDER BAZONZA AND OTHERS TO DO SO? BECAUSE HE DIDN'T KNOW THEM, EWOLO EXPLAINED. PROSECUTION OUTLINED MASSAMBA-DEBAT'S PLAN TO SIEZE POWER AND MOVE CAPITAL TO BOKO, SETTING UP OTHER REGIONAL CENTERS IN SOVANKE AND KELLE, AND REPLACING POINTE-NOIRE WITH LOUBOMO, AS COMMERCIAL CENTER. (END L.O.U.)

11. (BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: COMMENTS: IF ONE IS TO BELIEVE DEFENDANTS' PROFESSIONS OF INNOCENCE TO DATE, NGOUABI SEEMS TO HAVE DIED FROM AN OVERDOSE OF SLEEPING PILLS. PROSECUTION IS MAKING DEVASTATING CASE, WITH OCCASIONALLY UGLY SORTIES INTO CONFIDENTIAL

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CRITICIZING RELIGION. DEFENSE HAS BEEN DISASTER. MEDIA COVERAGE, IN ANOTHER ENVIRONMENT, WOULD BE LIBELOUS. ALL THOSE BEING TRIED HAVE BEEN HELD IN BRAZZAVILLE SINCE LAST MARCH; LISSOUBA, NOT (YET) ARRAIGNED, IS HELD IN OVESSO. WE UNDERSTAND PROSECUTOR'S STRATEGY IS TO HEAR FIRST THOSE INVOLVED IN ATTACK ITSELF, THEN TO MOVE INTO OTHER CIRCLES OF PLOTTERS. MFA SYG OVVERS ONE RAY OF HOPE: THAT IS TAKES A NATIONAL TRAGEDY SUCH AS THIS TO PULL COUNTRY TOGETHER. IN CASE OF CONGO, WE SHALL SEE. KATZEN

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